

SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Confirmed Minutes of the Scottish Social Services Council Held on 30 October 2007 at Compass House, Dundee

Present:

Garry Coutts, Convener	Dr Anne Haddow
Michael Cairns	Margaret McKay
Elizabeth Carmichael	Professor Bart McGettrick
Professor Frank Clark	Maureen O'Neill
Karen Croan	Stan Smith
Ian Doig	

In Attendance:

Carole Wilkinson, Chief Executive
Geraldine Doherty, Registrar
Mary Howden, Head of Education and Workforce Development
Val Murray, Legal Adviser
Gordon Weir, Director of Corporate Services
Nicky Scott, Communications Manager
Bryan Healy, Regulation and Practice Learning Manager
Karen McLaughlin, Learning and Development Adviser
Norma Mackenzie, Committee Administrator
Diane White, Sponsorship Manager, Sponsor Division

1 Welcome

1.1 The Convener welcomed everyone present to the meeting and stated that he was pleased to have been appointed Convener of the SSSC at what was an exciting time for the development of the social services workforce. The Convener paid tribute to his predecessor, Morag Alexander, and asked for his appreciation and thanks for all the work that she had undertaken to be recorded.

2 Apologies for Absence

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Kingsley Thomas, Member.

3 Declaration of Interests

3.1 Karen Croan declared an interest in Item 7, given her position as Director of Human Resources for Quarriers, which has a responsibility for the provision of education and training of social service workers. Elizabeth Carmichael declared an interest in Item 7. Margaret McKay confirmed that she no longer had an interest in financial matters relative to the provision of bursaries, given the fact that her son is no longer a recipient of a bursary from the SSSC. Ian Doig declared an interest in Item 15, Finance and Resources Committee Minutes of the meeting of 9 October 2007, given his daughter's employment with one of the 3 firms

of solicitors appointed to the panel of Legal Advisers to the Registration and Conduct Sub-committees.

4 Minutes of the meeting of 12 June 2007

- 4.1 The Minutes of the meeting of 12 June 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

5 Matters Arising

- 5.1 There were no matters arising.

6 Chief Executive's Report – Report No: 16/07

- 6.1 The Chief Executive's report covered the period 1 June to 30 October 2007 and provided information in relation to staff of the SSSC: important meetings, conference and events; including a meeting called by the First Minister in June which allowed public service leaders to meet the Cabinet and be given information about the new administration's intended approach to public services.
- 6.2 The Chief Executive briefed Members on the following from her report: an update on the project "Simplifying the Public Service Landscape" which has been established to achieve more efficient and streamlined public services; details of relevant parliamentary questions; a Freedom of Information request and developments in relation to the SSSC's Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002; Consultations; review of the Risk Register; an update on the **On-Line Social CAre Register (OSCAR)**.
- 6.3 Members were informed of the proposed revisions to the Registration Rules which were set out in paragraph 9 of the report: information on an amended draft of the Registration Rules which provide for workers in care homes for adults which is currently with the Scottish Government for consideration. A separate set of Registration Rules is being drafted to make provision for EU visiting social workers as such workers will not apply for registration in the normal way. Authority was requested for the Chair of the RRMCM to agree the content of separate Registration Rules, and to seek Scottish Ministers consent to the Rules relevant to visiting EU social workers.
- 6.4 Members discussed issues relevant to any impact on efficiency savings as a result of the delay in the implementation of OSCAR. The 3% efficiency savings in the processing of initial registrations and the maintenance of the register were not expected by early 2008 because of the delays in the implementation of OSCAR. However the Registrar indicated that staff were hopeful that some efficiencies could be achieved through streamlining business processes.

6.5 A member asked if there was any implication to the SSSC from a response to a parliamentary question (paragraph 2.4 (v)) relative to how Disclosure Scotland rules apply to migrant workers from outside and inside EU states. The Registrar explained that currently Disclosure Scotland checks only cover the UK and that the arrangements for gaining equivalent criminal records checks vary significantly in EU states and other international countries and that such checks are not available in some countries. She explained that to date this has not been a major issue for the SSSC because it has been possible to obtain equivalent checks on relevant applicants although the time taken to achieve such checks has delayed the processing of applications in some cases. However, she explained it will probably become more of an issue when mandatory registration is introduced for other groups of workers, for example, adult residential care workers as the indications are that these services employ more migrant workers.

6.6 **The Council resolved:**

- i) to note the report of the Chief Executive
- ii) to grant authority to the Chair of the Registration and Regulation Monitoring Committee to agree the terms of the Registration Rules for Visiting EU Social Workers as set out in paragraph 9 of the report.

7 An Integrated Vision for Practice Learning in the Degree in Social Work – Report No: 17/07

7.1 Bryan Healy, Regulation and Practice Learning Manager, presented his report outlining the background, progress and current situation in working to achieve an integrated approach to practice learning in the social work degree. The Learning and Development Committee had requested that a report be brought to Council for Members' information. The report as a starting point took the publication of "Confidence in Practice Learning" in January 2004 and described the achievements of the Scottish Practice Learning Project, the development of the Practice Learning Qualification (Social Services), and the role of Learning Networks and issues relating to practice learning capacity. The report reflected on the management of change and considered some of the further options in supporting sustainable change in practice learning.

7.2 Members discussed the Learning Network role, the funded Practice Teaching Units, capacity issues and the management of change and future progress in managing change. The issue of the turnover and dropout rates of "active" practice learners and the implications of this and how to embed practice learning with employers was discussed. The role of the Council in looking at integration and the holistic view of encouraging professional learners was recognised as a complex issue. The role of the SSSC in developing policies and integrated practice learning for social work training was reiterated as was the work required by the SSSC and stakeholders to embed practice learning as part of everyday practice.

7.3 The financial implications of developing a strengthened communications strategy for practice learning is to be incorporated into budget planning.

7.4 **The Council resolved:**

- i) to note the report
- ii) to note the progress made in achieving an integrated vision for practice learning
- iii) to note the plans for taking the practice learning agenda forward
- iv) to request that the Learning and Development Committee be given regular reports and ensure that the mechanisms are in place for reporting to Council on the future effectiveness of practice learning.

8 Development of the Mental Health Officer Award – Report No: 18/07

8.1 Karen McLaughlin, Learning and Development Adviser, presented the final report of the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) convened to take forward the development of a new Mental Health Officer Award. The SLWG has completed its work in overseeing the development of new standards and practice competencies, the construction of credible cost analysis of course provision and the recommendation that the new award be delivered in partnership between employers and HEIs at Level 11 of the SCQF.

8.2 The Learning and Development Adviser requested Members to note a correction to the figures outlined at paragraph 4.2 of the report. The total cost of delivery should read £1,090,440.

8.3 The activities of the three sub-groups set up to undertake work on the development of standards and practice competences, investigating the cost of current programmes, and models of delivery were outlined. Ian Doig informed Council that he was a member of the SLWG and had chaired the Finance sub-group and spoke about the difficulty in obtaining final figures for implementation and funding the development and delivery of the award. The financial implications were outlined in the report and discussed. He stressed that it was important for future working groups to get the Finance Department to provide figures at an appropriate stage of the group's discussion. It was agreed in principle that the Finance Department should be asked to check the financial implications of reports where the proposed cost exceeded a specified financial level, which level would be agreed at a later date as part of a general review of corporate governance arrangements.

8.4 Diane White, Sponsor Division, informed Council that the Scottish Government was looking at how to secure further funding for the delivery of the Mental Health Officer Award; it was not an issue for the Council.

8.5 The involvement of criminal justice staff in the consultation process was noted and the Council would keep the Scottish Government Criminal Justice department informed.

8.6 **The Council resolved:**

- i) to note the contents of the report
- ii) to accept the SLWG recommendations regarding acceptance of the standards, the title of the award, delivery and levelling within the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework, and the partnership approach to development
- iii) to note the plan for future development of the new award
- iv) to endorse the proposal to establish an advisory group to oversee the development phase
- v) to request that the Finance Department check the financial implications of reports where the proposed cost exceeded a specified financial level, which level would be agreed at a later date as part of a general review of corporate governance arrangements.

9 **Annual Quality Assurance Reports**

9a **Annual Quality Assurance Report of approved education and training provision in respect of courses formerly approved by CCETSW, for the period 2006/07 – Report No: 19a/07**

9a.1 The Council had before it a report by John Yellowlees, Learning and Development Adviser, providing the Council with information on the report which was presented to the Learning and Development Committee on 21 August 2007. The Committee had resolved that the Annual Report on Quality Assurance of approved education and training provision in respect of courses formerly approved by CCETSW: Report for the period May 2006 – April 2007 be recommended to Council and that it be published by the SSSC.

9a.2 The Council had continued to meet its responsibilities for quality assurance of approved provision and was assured that standards were being met.

9a.3 **The Council resolved:**

- i) to note the recommendations agreed by the Learning and Development Committee on 21 August 2007
- ii) to approve the Annual Report on Quality Assurance of approved education and training provision in respect of courses formerly approved by CCETSW: Report for the period May 2006 – April 2007
- iii) to agree the report be published.

9b **Annual Quality Assurance Report of the Degree in Social Work and postgraduate programmes approved in terms of s54 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, for the period 2006 – 2007 – Report No: 19b/07**

9b.1 The Council had before it a report by John Yellowlees, Learning and Development Adviser, providing the Council with information on the report

which was presented to the Learning and Development Committee on 21 August 2007. The Committee had resolved that the Annual Quality Assurance Report of the degree in social work and postgraduate programmes, approved in terms of s54 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, for the period 2006 – 2007 be recommended to the Council and that the report be published by the SSSC.

- 9b.2 Members welcomed the report and were pleased to note that last year's annual report on the degree included an action plan, and that all the action points from this plan and the recommendations from the Critical Thinking report (The New Degree in Social Work an Exploration of Stakeholder Views), were being taken forward in the revised approach to quality assurance and enhancement as reported to the Learning and Development Committee on 15 May 2007.
- 9b.3 Members were also pleased to note that the Annual Report highlights the fact that the courses are developing creative ways to engage service users and carers in all aspects of design, delivery and assessment. The mechanisms for obtaining students' views on the quality of course provision being built into HEI systems through various means, help in reporting the assessment and strengths of the courses.
- 9b.4 The revised approach to annual monitoring will ensure that any weaknesses in relating theory to practice, as indicated in some External Examiner reports will be subject to specific monitoring and this will be reported back to Learning and Development Committee in due course. The Convener acknowledged that the improvement in relating theory to practice would be an evolving process and for the Learning and Development Committee to monitor through future quality assurance reports.
- 9b.5 **The Council resolved:**
- i) to note the recommendations of the Learning and Development Committee on 21 August 2007
 - ii) to approve the Annual Quality Assurance Report of the Degree in Social Work for the period 2006 – 2007
 - ii) to agree the report be published.

10 Corporate Governance – Report No: 20/07

- 10.1 The Council had before it a report by Val Murray, Legal Adviser addressing a number of corporate governance issues; changes to the Register of Members' Interests, appointments of Members to Committees and Sub-committees, appointment of additional Due Regard Members to the Registration and Conduct Committees for the parts of the register for care home services for adults, amendment of the Scheme of Delegation relating to further powers for officers to deal with certain registration and conduct matters in the interest of efficiency and Council meeting dates for the years 2008 – 2010.
- 10.2 **The Council resolved:**

- i) to note the Register of Members' Interests appended to the report with one amendment agreed relative to Elizabeth Carmichael's declaration
- ii) to agree the appointments to Committees and Sub-committees in terms of paragraphs 2 and 3 within the report, with two changes namely Ian Doig was appointed to the Regulation and Registration Monitoring Committee and Kingsley Thomas was appointed to the Learning and Development Committee for the periods set out in the report
- iii) to agree to the amendment of the Scheme of Delegation as set out at paragraph 4 of the report
- iv) to agree Council meeting dates commencing at 1.30pm as follows:

2008	2009	2010
15 January	20 January	19 January
18 March	17 March	16 March
17 June	16 June	15 June
21 October	20 October	19 October

11 Corporate Plan Monitoring Report 2007 – 2008 Quarter 2 – Report No: 21/07

11.1 The Council had before it the Chief Executive's report outlining progress in delivering the objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan 2007 – 2008. Appended to the report were the actions in 2007 – 2008 and the performance and key indicators.

11.2 For the most part work is progressing and is on target. The Chief Executive outlined the areas which saw some slippage, clarifying that there continue to be some challenges in delivering our objectives where we are working in partnership with others. These challenges in partnership working were not seriously undermining delivery of the Corporate Plan and no exemptions at this stage of the planning year were required.

11.3 There would be opportunity for Members to have further discussion on the Corporate Plan and style of Corporate Plan monitoring reporting at a future date.

11.4 The Council resolved:

to note the progress in delivering the objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan 2007-2008.

12 2006 - 2007 Annual Report and Annual Accounts – Report No: 22/07

12.1 The Council had before it a report by Nicky Anderson, Accountant, which was presented by Gordon Weir, Director of Corporate Services, requesting

Council to approve the Annual Report and Accounts for 2006-07 as recommended by the Audit Committee on 23 October 2007.

12.2 Three appendices were attached to the report:

Appendix 1 – Annual Report and Accounts final draft
Appendix 2 – Auditors Report on the 2006-07 audit
Appendix 3 – draft Letter of Representation.

12.3 The Auditor had provided an unqualified opinion on the SSSC's 2006-07 financial statements. Issues identified by the auditor during the course of the audit were detailed in the "Draft Report on 2006-07 audit" along with a management response and action plan. Following discussion at the Audit Committee the Final Report will contain an amendment in the "Looking Forward" section of the Report on the challenges to the SSSC of registration not being mandatory.

12.4 The Director of Corporate Services outlined the key issues within the report and the points as discussed at the Audit Committee on 23 October 2007:

- (i) the SSSC's financial position at the end of 2006/07 was a funding deficit of £201k. This was primarily due to a university finding an error on a practice learning fee claim after the Scottish Government had closed their accounts. The university had underclaimed by £194k. The expenditure was accrued in the SSSC's accounts but to ensure consistency with the Sponsor's accounts the corresponding income was accounted for in 2007/08
- (ii) the Sponsor agreed in 2005/06 to the SSSC holding a specific reserve of £120k to fund future years' legal costs. This reserve has not been required to date and remains at £120k
- (iii) a specific reserve of £375k was also created in 2005/06 for the development costs of the On-line Social Care Register (OSCAR) system. During 2006/07 £252k of this reserve was utilised leaving a balance at the year end of £123k. It is anticipated that the £123k remaining in this reserve will be required in full in 2007/08.

12.5 Stan Smith, Chair of the Audit Committee, informed Council of the Committee's discussion relevant to the importance of mandatory registration and the reasons why the Committee requested this to be included in the Auditor's report. Council noted the Auditor's commendations of the Finance team for a well presented audit and the quick responses to questions that she had raised.

12.6 Council agreed the need for mandatory registration to be addressed, particularly in relation to residential child care workers. Members welcomed the information from Diane White, that the new administration was very aware of the issues and that the Minister was considering mandatory registration. She explained that the next phase of registration was also under consideration. The Council agreed the importance of a proportionate approach to extending the scope of

registration further and the need for due consideration of the part played by other regulators, for example, the Care Commission and other public protection measures, for example, the new vetting and barring system.

12.7 The Council resolved:

- (i) to note the report from Audit Scotland on the audit of the Annual Report and Accounts 2006-07 and the response from Management
- (ii) to approve the Annual Report and Accounts 2006/07.

13 SSSC 2007 - 2008 Budget Monitoring Statement – Report No: 23/07

- 13.1 Council had before it a report by Nicky Anderson, Senior Accountant, providing Council with information on the SSSC's budget monitoring position as at 31 August 2007. The report and budget monitoring statement appended to the report were discussed at the Finance and Resources Committee which recommended the budget monitoring statement for submission to the Council and Sponsor.
- 13.2 The Director of Corporate Services highlighted key issues within the report. The practice learning and bursaries outturns will be reviewed in detail before the next meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee.
- 13.3 The Chief Executive also updated Members on the current position regarding the staff vacancies and pay remit. Staff have been notified of the result of the pay remit and the formal offer will now be presented to the trade union.
- 13.4 The Chief Executive informed Members that the Finance and Resources Committee would be presented with a revised style of budget monitoring report and statement in the next financial year. The new format will explain financial movement since the previous budget monitoring report.

13.5 The Council resolved:

to note the budget monitoring report.

14 Communications Strategy Monitoring Report (June 2007 – September 2007) – Report No: 24/07

- 14.1 The Council had before it a report by Nicky Scott, Communications Manager, which informed Members that targets for communication activity were being met. The main activities of the Communications team during this period were outlined. Activities included a stakeholder survey and an awareness raising campaign about registration targeted at workers in care home services for adults. Appended to the report were information statistics and a media and publicity report.

14.2 The Communications Manager updated Council verbally on the stakeholder survey carried out by TNS System 3 to establish levels of awareness of the role of the SSSC. She informed Members that the full report and commentary will be available to Members in November 2007. Members welcomed the verbal update and noted a more detailed commentary and a full set of findings was to be issued in due course.

14.3 The Council resolved:

- i) to note the contents of the Communication Strategy monitoring report
- ii) to note the Communications Manager will provide full commentary and report on the views and findings of the stakeholder survey.

15 Committee Minutes

15.1 Council noted the following:

- i) Unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting of 21 May 2007
- ii) Unconfirmed Minutes of the Learning and Development Committee meeting of 21 August 2007
- iii) Unconfirmed Minutes of the Registration and Regulation Monitoring Committee meeting of 20 September 2007
- iv) Unconfirmed Minutes of the Registration Committee meeting of 28 August 2007
- v) Unconfirmed Minutes of the Conduct Committee meeting of 28 August 2007
- vi) Unconfirmed Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting of 9 October 2007.

15.2 The respective Chairs of the Committees took the opportunity to brief Members on some of the key issues which had been discussed and minuted at the meetings. With reference to the RRMC Minutes of 20 September 2007, article 16.3, Margaret McKay, Chair, reported back on Members' concern about an apparent lack of direction and achievement in relation to Changing Lives and the implications this might have for the SSSC since its contributions were seen as central to the achievements of the aims of Changing Lives. It was proposed that officers seek a meeting with Val Cox, Deputy Director, Workforce and Capacity, Scottish Government to establish the direction and achievements in relation to Changing Lives and the implications this might have for the SSSC.

15.3 The Chief Executive informed Council of the progress of the workforce development group in several strands of Changing Lives work, principally, the Continuous Learning Framework and scoping of new roles. The Chief Executive agreed to address Changing Lives implementation with the Sponsor and to circulate information on the outcome of discussions to Members.

- 15.4 It was agreed that the Chief Executive produce a report setting out the various work strands arising from Changing Lives, and the progress made, for a future meeting of the Council.
- 15.5 With reference to the Audit Committee meeting of 23 October 2007, Minutes of which were not yet available, the Chair, Stan Smith informed Council that a Fraud Policy and Response Plan, and a Risk Management Policy had been discussed and approved at the Committee meeting and these were recommended to Council. The Council endorsed the recommendation of adoption of the Fraud Policy and Response Plan and the Risk Management Policy as approved by the Audit Committee.

16 Any Other Competent Business

- 16.1 Ian Doig suggested that following a style change to the Finance and Resources Committee agenda that other agendas for Council and Committees be set out so that items of business were grouped according to whether they were for:
 - a) noting
 - b) discussion
 - c) decision

The Convener agreed that this was a good opportunity to review issues relevant to governance arrangements and stated that a review would be carried out over the next few months.

- 16.2 The Convener informed Council that following his request to the Scottish Ministers for an extension of Ian Doig’s appointment as Depute Convener of the SSSC for a further 3 months, the appointment had been extended up to the end of January 2008.

.....
 Garry Coutts
 Convener
 Scottish Social Services Council

Date: